

Appleby Archaeology Group

Notes of the Annual General Meeting of the Appleby Archaeology Group which took place on Tuesday January 13th 2016 at the Market Hall, Appleby at 7.00pm.

Present

Committee members: 6

Members of the group: 22

Phyllis Rouston
Heather Edwards
Martin Joyce
Carol Dougherty

Chairman
Membership Secretary
Newsletter Editor

Martin Railton
Richard Stevens

Fieldwork/Research
Secretary

Apologies for Absence

Mike Godfrey, Linda Davis, Stephen Walker, Sean Hamer, Jen Callis, Mick Yates

Minutes of the last AGM held on 13/01/2015

The minutes had been circulated to all members with the winter Newsletter. There being no errors identified, the minutes were approved by the meeting.

1/2016 Matters arising from the notes

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

2/2016 Chairman's Report

The Chairman welcomed and thanked those present for attending the 17th AGM at the end of another good year for the group. She went on to thank the members of the committee for all they do to ensure the group runs smoothly. It had been, she said, an exciting year with the launch of the Appleby Project, of which more would be said later. Membership remains good, in November 2015 there were 68 members in total, much in line with previous years.

The Chairman went on to say that her main concern was the future of the group. Most present would be aware of the difficulties that the Appleby in Westmorland Society were presently experiencing. She had been in contact with the secretary of that organisation from time to time and although she was not aware of the outcome of that group's crucial November meeting, the general situation of the A in W Society was a loud wake-up call for our group.

Unlike the A in W Society, there were no plans for a mass resignation of this committee but it is important that we must have new blood. She said that her tenure as Chairman ends this year and she was not contemplating taking on a further role. Both she and Martin Railton had been on the committee since the group began in 1998 (almost 17 years), both the Secretary and Newsletter Editor since 2002 (14 years), the Treasurer since 2005 (11 Years) and other members have been serving for a number of years as well.

We must ask ourselves an important question, she said. Do we wish Appleby Archaeology to continue as an active, forward looking organisation? She hoped that the answer would be yes but in order to do so we would need the members to support us by serving on the committee and taking an active role in the future. The time to come forward is now, when there are still committee members willing to help with the workload and to pass on the accumulated knowledge of the group. So, she said, please come forward, have a taster session at a committee meeting, speak to any one of the committee members. Everyone has something they can contribute so please help guarantee the future of the group.

3/2016 Secretary's Report

The secretary said that once again his report was much the same as last year, it had been a successful and stable period for the group, membership numbers were about the same, all the talks were well attended as were the summer visits. He said that during the year we had of course been forced to vacate Centre 67 and return to the Market Hall at fairly short notice and more would be said about that later. There had been had an unfortunate start to this winter's talks, having to change speakers at short notice on one occasion and also having to cancel last months meeting, for obvious reasons, however, he was hoping to get both speakers back next year. Earlier in the year we had heard talks on the Carlisle Canal, Medieval Deer Parks and the Roman Navy. John Zant came along to explain the results of Oxford Archaeology North's investigation of the A66 in North Yorkshire and Harry had done a great job with the first outing for his talk on the Armathwaite Nunnery. Harry had stepped in to save the day following a cancellation due to illness - not for the first time. The summer visits to Musgrave, following on from Mike Lea's talk, and to Roman Binchester, where there had been an excellent guided walk from David Mason, both proved popular.

He went on to say that the committee meetings had been held regularly, planning the year ahead, keeping a check on finances etc. Reports of most of the talks had appeared in the newsletter and, as members would have been aware, in the Cumberland and Westmorland Herald. The talks were of course archived on the website. He said that he did try to keep members up to date with anything of interest by email although he had some concerns about this - he believed that some members had not received notification of the cancellation of the December talk. He asked that any members who were affected contact him and he would investigate.

The secretary said that a number of members were now electing to receive the newsletter as an email attachment and this seemed to be working successfully. It did save some postage and printing costs which was helpful. Martin Joyce would continue to produce the newsletter as a hard copy for those that wished to receive it. The printing will in future be done by Milburn School, since the group had ceased printing at Wardell Armstrong. He thanked Wardell Armstrong for their kind assistance in the past.

The secretary said that Martin also looked after the website and had recently updated the group's administrative systems which automate some aspects of the committee's work and so save the committee some time and he expressed the committee's thanks to him. Martin Railton kept the Facebook page up to date, where members could find last minute information and also various items and links to sites of archaeological interest.

Concluding, the secretary said that he personally wished to endorse the Chairman's comments about the future of the group. The present committee had largely been in place for about 15 years, any changes had mostly been a case of musical chairs. Realistically, this could not continue indefinitely, so there was a pressing need for new blood, a new viewpoint, on the committee or there was the danger that the group would go the way of the Appleby in Westmorland Society, who were in desperate trouble and largely for the same underlying reasons. Appleby Archaeology, he said, belongs to the members, it doesn't belong to the committee and it needs your help to sustain it into the future. He intimated that the work of the committee was not all that daunting – before he had joined as Vice Chairman in 2002, he had no knowledge of archaeology and no idea of what the committee actually did, so he had initially felt some trepidation over volunteering. Fortunately, there were people there then who were willing to guide and help and there still are.

4/2016 Treasurer's Report.

Martin Joyce presented the report on behalf of the Treasurer, who was unable to attend.

Copies of the accounts were presented around the room and Martin went through the major items. He said that subscriptions had held up well, slightly up on the previous year, as was the income from coffee donations and visitor's fees. The amounts received from the CWAAS and the

Appleby Town Council were fully allocated grants specifically to pay for the post-excavation work on the Brackenber finds, the latter for the conservation of the collared urn rim, which would be displayed in the TIC when conserved.

Outgoings, at £839, were slightly down on last year. However, the income of £802 against outgoings of £848 meant that the committee had reluctantly decided to ask for an increase in subscription fees as from January 2017 in order to safeguard the group's finances beyond next year. The proposal was to increase individual membership from £12 to £15, from £20 to £25 for joint memberships, to increase the visitor's fee from £2 to £3 and possibly to ask for a small donation for summer events, in particular, those where the activity has some financial cost, for example, paying a guide. The present fees had been in place for 4 years and it was felt that even with the projected increase, this would still be good value for members.

Acceptance of the report and subscription increase was proposed by Carol Dougherty, seconded by Maureen Moore and approved by the meeting.

5/2016 Election of Officers and Committee members

The Chairman advised the meeting that the three officers were presenting themselves for re-election and asked for approval by the meeting. No other nominations being received, the re-election of Phyllis Rouston, Mike Godfrey and Richard Stevens was proposed by Maureen Moore, seconded by Chris Wilson and approved by the meeting.

All other members of the committee offered themselves for re-election. There were no other nominations from the floor and so the re-election of Heather Edwards, Carol Dougherty, Martin Joyce and Martin Railton was proposed by Trish Shaw, seconded by Marjorie Campion and approved by the meeting.

6/2016 Change of Venue

The Chairman explained the reasons why it had been necessary to vacate our preferred venue, the supper room, last year. The room had been required for another community group, who guaranteed 42 weeks of bookings, whereas our requirement was only for 8 for the year. This meant increased income for the Council, and it was of course fair that they should prefer to take the booking which increased their income. The group moved to the Market Hall but it proved unsuitable for our requirements, being too large and having poor acoustics for talks. At that time, alternative venues in Appleby had been visited and evaluated and the outcome was that Centre 67 was deemed the most suitable. The group duly moved there and while some of the facilities in the venue were very good, other factors were less than perfect, including maximum capacity, disabled access & temperature control. However, on balance, it was decided to move there. As members were aware, this came to a sudden halt last year when the centre ran out of funding. The group's subsequent move back to the Market Hall was the rather unsatisfactory result.

The committee are aware that the Hub, as Centre 67 is now called, has reopened but the committee are now more aware of the shortcomings of the venue and would like to recommend a move back to the supper room. This is still not possible on Tuesdays, so they recommended that the evening be changed to Thursday. Whilst it is realised that this will inconvenience some members who attend other activities on Thursdays, it is felt that this is the best overall compromise. All other evenings along with all other local group activities have been looked at and Thursday is the evening which inconveniences the least number of members.

The Chairman asked for a vote on the proposal to change the winter season evening meetings to the second Thursday of each month in the supper room, as from October 2016. With a few abstentions, there was a clear majority in favour, with 2 voting against and consequently, the proposal was adopted.

7/2016 Future of the Newsletter

The Newsletter Editor began by saying that he had now been editing the newsletter for 10 years

but that he had become concerned that the style was no longer what members wanted or expected. For example, it might be that there is no longer a necessity to print all the talk reports because they appear regularly in the Cumberland and Westmorland Herald. In addition, all extant talk reports are archived on the website. One member pointed out that not everyone has internet access and so would not be able to access this archive. For them, the newsletter as it stands is a vital aspect of the group's identity, as well as being an excellent publication in itself. The editor said that although he will continue to produce the newsletter in its current format, he would still be very happy to give someone else the opportunity to take on the production and he would welcome any approach from the membership.

8/2016 AOB

None

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.40pm.

Richard Stevens 13th January 2016